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## The EU's Financial Support for Regional or Minority Languages: A Historical Assessment

The EU professes to have a positive policy towards RMLs, as enshrined in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Since the beginning of the 1980s the then European Economic Community has shown some awareness of the issue and has tried to support RMLs in a variety of ways. This support, nevertheless, has decreased over time, in particular since 2000. The goal of this article is to provide a detailed financial assessment of EU support to RMLs from 1994 to 2006 and to present the main trend in RMLs support after 2006. This article, based on official data, shows that the amounts concerned, even during the relatively more favourable 1990s, have remained small. We also conclude that RML-specific programmes and actions (as opposed to mainstreaming support) have been much more successful at channelling resources towards RMLs. We conclude the article by discussing the most important trends in RML support after 2006, showing that support from the EU in this area has remained modest.

**Keywords:** Regional and minority languages, European Union, language policy evaluation, costs.

### Evropska podpora regionalnim in manjšinskim jezikom: finančni pregled in ocena

*EU se ponaša s pozitivno politiko do regionalnih in manjšinskih jezikov, kar določa tudi 22. člen Evropske listine o temeljnih pravicah. Že v zgodnjih 80. letih prejšnjega stoletja je tedanja Evropska gospodarska skupnost pokazala določeno občutljivost za to področje, ki pa je sčasoma še posebej po letu 2000, precej upadla. Članek prinaša podrobno finančno oceno podpore EU regionalnim in manjšinskim jezikom v obdobju med letoma 1994 in 2006 ter prikaz trenda te podpore po letu 2006. Zneski podpore so bili celo v relativno ugodnih 90. letih nizki, specifični programi in akcije (v nasprotju z uradno podporo) veliko bolj uspešni v zagotavljanju sredstev. Članek zaključujemo z obravnavo trendov po letu 2006, ki kažejo, da je EU manjšinskim in regionalnim jezikom namenjala le skromna sredstva.*

**Ključne besede:** regionalni in manjšinski jeziki, Evropska unija, evalvacija jezikovne politike, stroški.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 On the Need for an Assessment

According to the official figures published by the European Commission, there are more than 60 indigenous regional and minority languages (RMLs)<sup>1</sup> in Europe, in addition to the 24 official languages of the European Union (EU).<sup>2</sup> These languages are spoken by about 40 million people, and in the future the degree of linguistic diversity in the Union is likely to rise as a result of increasing flows of new immigrant communities. RMLs have neither working nor official status in the European Union if they do not also happen to be the official language of a Member State. It would, however, be misleading to conclude that the absence of minority languages from the set of the official languages of the EU implies an absence of Community activity in the field. Generally speaking, the EU professes to have a positive policy towards RMLs, as enshrined in Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which states that “the Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity”, and since the beginning of the 1980s the then European Economic Community has shown some awareness of the issue and has tried to support RMLs in a variety of ways. This support, nevertheless, has decreased over time, in particular since 2000 when the budget line that provided regular funding earmarked for RMLs was cancelled, and by the tightening (European Parliament 2016), in 2003-2004, of conditions imposed on project-based funding to the European Bureau for Lesser-used languages (EBLUL) that was eventually closed in 2010. Nevertheless, after 2007 the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU funded some new networks that are active in the promotion of RMLs such as the Network for the promotion of linguistic diversity (NPLD), the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN),<sup>3</sup> and the Mercator Research Centres.

The picture, therefore, is neither a rosy nor completely bleak one, making it necessary to provide a historical financial assessment of the extent of EU support to RMLs. The goal of this article is to provide just such an assessment, drawing on the SMiLE report,<sup>4</sup> where SMiLE stands for Support for Minority Languages in Europe (Grin et al. 2003) and updating it with some more recent references. This report, which was commissioned by the EU, represents, to our knowledge, the first complete tally ever made of the different EU sources of support to RMLs and of the amounts involved. Yet its results are still relatively unknown by specialists.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 State of the Art and Goals of the Article

Systematic empirical studies of the economic conditions for (minority) language maintenance with an international perspective are rare. Since seminal works, such as Joshua Fishman's work on language revitalization (Fishman

1991), comparative research has covered minority language conditions (e.g., the Euromosaic reports I-IV, see Nelde et al. 1996, updated with data on new member states 1999, 2004 and 2009; for revised methodology, see Darquennes et al. 2004). Also language policy issues have been extensively covered since early works by, e.g., Williams (1991), and today several international journals specialise in this field (for an example, focusing particularly on the same geographical region as this article, see *European Journal of Language Policy*, edited in co-operation with the European Language Council).<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, none of these contributions addresses the question of RMLs support from a financial point of view, pointing out and summarising the amount of resources invested in the promotion of minority languages.

EU policies in this field have been critically assessed in the literature since a ruling of the European Court of Justice in 1998, requiring a legal base for all types of EU support, was carried out in practice. Efforts to install a legal base for minority language projects were not successful, and the specific budget line for such projects was suppressed in 2001 (see, e.g., Cormack & Hourigan 2007). Also, the European Parliament has passed several resolutions and been confronted with initiatives at different levels on this matter (see Grin et al. 2003, Jones 2013).

In this context a more strict theoretical and methodological grounding of research on the economic base for language policies was called for, as a result of the spread of policy analysis and evaluation as disciplines aimed at improving the accountability of decision makers and the evaluation of the costs and effectiveness of public policies. The need for economically sound policy analysis in support for political decision-making was particularly urgent in contexts representing the type of linguistic diversity that was – and is – a fundamental characteristic of most of the world, not least Europe. Research focusing specifically on the economic aspects of language was developed by, e.g., Price (1997), and Grin and Vaillancourt (1997).

The study that this article draws on is informed by a theoretical approach that builds on empirically informed estimations of how economical investments in language policy outputs delivers outcomes in the form of sustained or increased use of the language in everyday life (see Grin & Vaillancourt 1998). The SMiLE Report represents the only comprehensive effort to place EU funding into such a perspective. Studies with more narrow focus (i.e., Jones 2013) have also informed this article and been helpful in our effort to update our data.

The aims of this article, nevertheless, are deliberately modest: we do not venture into explanation of how policy analysis theories and methodology can be applied to the study of minority languages (on this point, see Grin 2003). Our chief goal is to provide an information base that at the service of scholars, language planners, and other users as part of broader, yet systematic assessments of the extent of EU support for small languages. The SMiLE Report provides a

suitable basis for this purpose because it departs, both in terms of methodology and results, from the usual emphasis on legal-institutional or sociolinguistic issues. Though necessary, these approaches are not always adequate for guiding the policy-maker who has to choose between policy alternatives, and must therefore understand which specific measures should be adopted in order to implement those choices effectively and cost-effectively. All this underscores the need for an analytical framework that can focus on policy choices, their effects and their costs, which, in turn, calls for a review of the financial amounts involved.

The figures drawn from the SMiLE Report and discussed in this article, therefore, offer a systematic listing of programmes and actions in favour of RMLs. For the benefit of non-European readers, let us point out that in the context of EU policies, action is not necessarily the same thing as programme. The word action carries two meanings, both of which are significantly different from programme. The first refers to EU activities in the implementation of a given policy, but at a fairly general level. For example, an action can be undertaken in favour of RMLs, and be embodied in particular programmes. In this sense, action is broader than a specific programme. The second meaning refers, by contrast, to a more specific, limited part of a certain programme. For example, the Erasmus+ programme speaks about key actions promoting different kinds of learning. In this case, therefore, action means a sub-programme, or a budget line within a bigger programme.

Anyone familiar with the complexity of EU action in any given domain will appreciate the effort to provide a complete list of them, along with the corresponding expenditure figures. Identifying the relevant programmes and actions, and gathering information on the corresponding financial appropriations is a difficult task at the best of times, made harder by the fact that no integrative approach had been attempted so far, whether within the Commission or outside of it, to comprehensively list forms of EU action in favour of RMLs.

This article is organised as follows. Section 2 provides a general overview of EU interventions in favour of RMLs and of the methodology followed in this article. Section 3 reports on support measures and figures for the 1994-2000 period. Section 4 examines at closer range support measures for the period 2000-2006 – namely, after the suspension of the specific budget line for RMLs. Section 5 provides an overview of the most important initiatives of the EU in supporting RMLs after 2006. Section 6 is devoted to brief concluding remarks.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Forms of Financial Supports for Regional or Minority Languages

37

The first initiative on minority languages adopted by the EU was the Resolution of the European Parliament on a Community Charter of Regional Languages and Cultures and on a Charter of rights of Ethnic Minorities (OJ C 287 9 November 1981). The resolution was authored by Gaetano Arfé MEP; in 1983 a separate budget line was created to provide support to projects particularly benefiting RMLs. This resolution was followed by different resolutions and own-initiative reports, the most recent one being the European Parliament on RMLs is the European Parliament Resolution on Endangered European Languages and Linguistic Diversity in the European Union, authored by François Alfonsi and adopted on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013.<sup>7</sup> Before 1992 the Commission has had a near monopoly on initiating legislation in the European Communities. The Maastricht Treaty in 1992 gave the European Parliament an equivalent right. Under Article 192, the Parliament, with an absolute majority of its members, can request that the Commission “submits any appropriate proposal on matters on which it considers that a Community act is required for the purpose of implementing this Treaty”. (Corbett et al. 2005: 230-231). Between 1992 and 2015 only 37 resolutions inviting the Commission to submit such proposals have been adopted by the Parliament, one of them being the legislative own-initiative report and resolution regional and lesser-used languages 14 July 2003. As a result of the Ebner resolution,<sup>8</sup> all funding programmes were opened up to all languages and a Commission portfolio exclusively for multilingualism was created. Generally speaking, during the three decades, the EU’s attempt to protect and promote RMLs followed three different directions.

The first form of EU support to RMLs was the separate budget line (B3-1006 since 1998, and then B3-1000), which from 1983 to 2000 provided funding to projects particularly benefiting RMLs. In 1998, the budget line for RMLs was suspended as a result of a ruling delivered by the Court of Justice.<sup>9</sup> The suppression of the budget line for RMLs resulted from legal implications that had nothing to do with RMLs, but this ruling made it clear that the continuation of EU support to particular projects in favour of RMLs – among other EU actions not covered by a legal base – would henceforth explicitly require such a base. In practice, support to projects was allowed to continue for three years, while a legal base was being prepared. The Commission has not been successful in installing a legal base of this kind.

The second form of EU support for RMLs has been through funding for the setting up of structures to support networking and co-operation between RML communities and projects. The European Bureau for lesser-used languages (EBLUL) was established in 1982 and closed in 2010. The Bureau was an

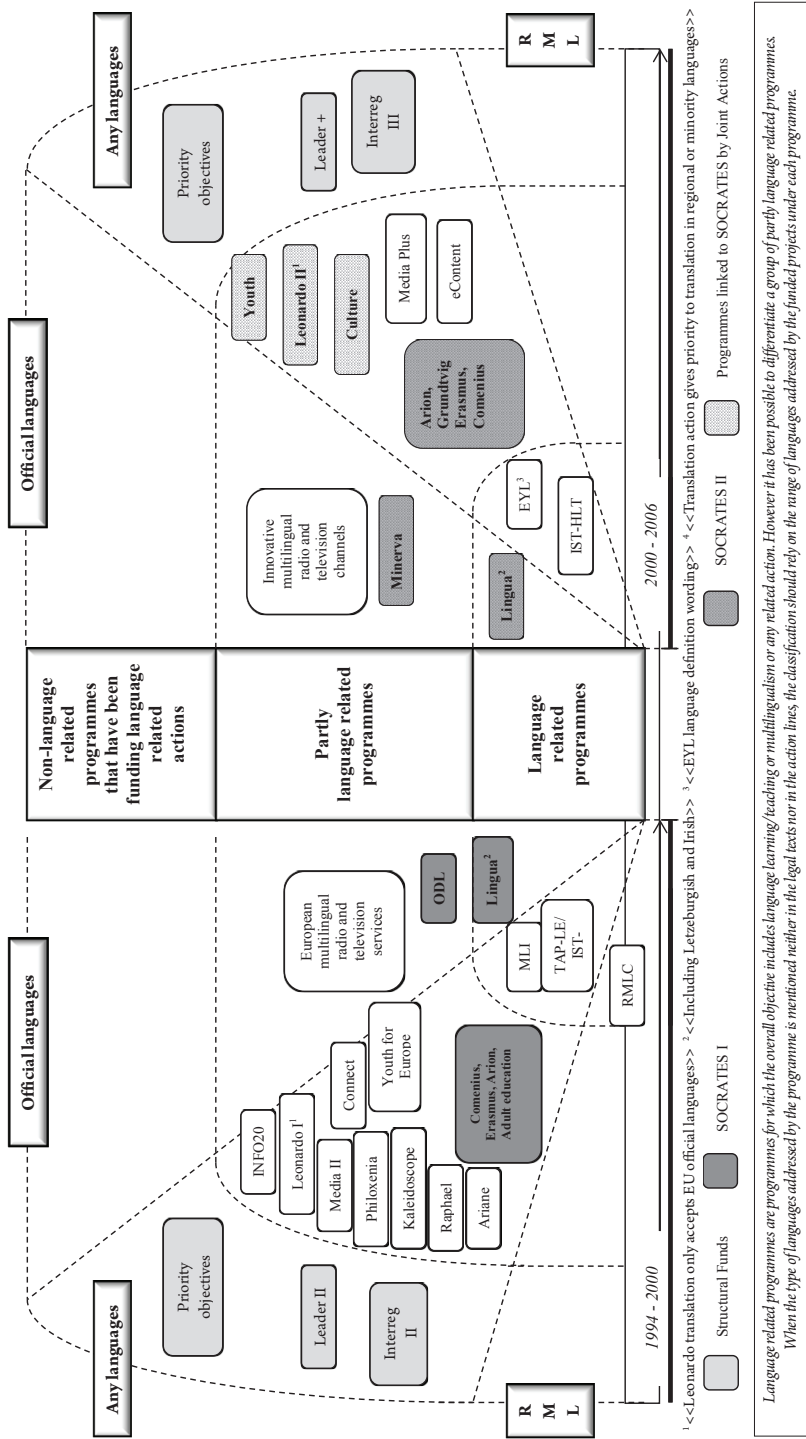


independent Non-Governmental Organisation working for languages and linguistic diversity. The Bureau had a role of central importance to European networking in the field of language promotion. The budget line B3-1006 also served to fund EBLUL and the three Mercator Centres (Mercator Education, Mercator Legislation and Mercator Media). These three research and documentation centres on RMLs still exist, although sometimes under a different label, and they are part to the Mercator network. This network was founded in 1987. Its mission is to connect multilingual communities across Europe, promoting knowledge sharing and facilitating structured exchange of best practice and cutting edge initiatives through its programme of activities. The network consists of five members, i.e., the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, Mercator Legislation, Mercator Media, the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, and Stockholm University. It was funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. This programme also contributed to the financing of the Network for the Promotion of Linguistic Diversity. This network was established in 2009, and it is a pan-European government-based institution made up by regional governments but also by some states such as Ireland. Its full members are all governments, whereas its associate members are research centres and non-profit associations. It was created with the support of the European Commission and led by different state and regional governments comprising universities, associations and NGO's working in the field of language policy and planning for Constitutional, Regional and Small-State Languages (CRSS) across Europe. Another organisation receiving funding under the Lifelong Learning Programme for promoting RMLs, as mentioned before, was the Federal Union of European Nationalities. The European Language Equality Network receives funding under Erasmus+ through the Digital Language Diversity Project.

Finally, a third form of support to RMLs was offered by including them in projects carried out within a broader framework (a strategy known as mainstreaming), along with other (non RML-related) projects fulfilling the requirements of the programme objectives. In this article, we leave aside the support institutions in order to focus on the two other types of actions. As a first step, it is necessary to understand the structure and the evolution over time of EU programmes that are, to a greater or lesser extent, related to languages. This gives rise to a representation of these programmes on a diagram bearing no less than four dimensions, namely:

- the time period (1994-2000 and 2000-2006);
- the extent to which the programmes and actions considered are explicitly language-related, partly language-related, or non-language related;
- the languages eligible in each case;
- and finally, the administrative position of each activity in terms of its affiliation to other actions and programmes, in particular Socrates.

Figure 1: Categorisation of EU Activities with Relevance to Support for Language  
Updated of figure 2.1, SMILE Report, pag. 242





Our discussion introduces a further distinction between projects directly aimed at RMLs and projects that merely include a partner from an RML community. As in the SMiLE Report, the former are called A-list projects (for which exhaustive figures are provided) and the latter B-list projects.

## 2.2 Data Collection

In order to develop these two lists, the following methodology has been adopted: these lists are based on the official archives of the EU institutions (mainly the Commission), complemented with information received from various actors, such as regional authorities, NGOs and academic institutions. The analysis and description of the allocation of funds focuses on the A-list, that is on projects that are specifically intended to promote RMLs. This listing is not exhaustive, since some of the actors contacted (for example, regional authorities) never answered the requests for information of the authors of the SMiLE report, and project lists received from them are incomplete. For these reasons, budget figures for some projects are missing. Thus, the percentages indicating the share of a programme's or action's funding should not be considered as an exact figure. Rather, they constitute an approximation. Another limitation that must be mentioned is that, both in the table and in the commented listing, some RMLs or some regions tend to be overrepresented, while others are underrepresented. This is due to the fact mentioned above that some regional authorities and their EU representations have been very co-operative, while others did not send or simply do not possess information requested. The long list of Basque projects funded under the regional programmes in the A-list (as opposed to the near-absence of other regions) is explained by these constraints.

The A-list is furthermore divided into projects according to the number of partners, as well as three categories; projects with only RML partners, projects where RML partners form the majority and finally, projects with a minority of partners representing RMLs. The projects are also listed according to their size: there is a category with projects under €30 thousand in turnover, a second group with projects that have a turnover between €30 thousand and €100 thousand and a third and final column with projects with a turnover over €100 thousand.

## 3. EU Funding from 1994 to 2000

This section is divided in three parts in order to reflect three different degrees of inclusion of the language dimension into EU programmes or actions. As shown in Figure 1, a distinction is made between language-related programmes, partly-language-related programmes and non-language-related programmes that have been funding language-related actions.

### 3.1 Programmes Directly Related to Languages

These programmes are presented in the first section<sup>10</sup> from the bottom in Figure 1.

- The Community action for the Promotion and Safeguard of Regional and Minority Languages and Cultures (here referred to as the RML action);
- The Lingua action (part of Socrates, see below);
- The Multilingual Information Society programme (or MLIS);
- Language engineering (LE) and Human Language Technologies (HLT).

The Community action for the Promotion and Safeguard of Regional and Minority Languages and Cultures was an action targeting specifically those languages traditionally used within the European Union, meaning that dialects and migrant languages could not apply for funding under this action. As noted before, the budget line for RMLs was launched in 1983. In current euros, this budget line has increases regularly until 1995, before decreasing from 1996 to 1998; the same holds in real terms, albeit with a slight dip in 1994.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 1: The development of the European Parliament B-line support for Regional and Minority Languages (millions of current euros)**

Year	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
€ Mil - current euros	0.1	0.2	0.34	0.68	0.86	1	1	1.1	2	2.5	3.5	3.5	4	4	3.7	3.4 <sup>12</sup>
€ Mil - constant euros (1995)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2.21	2.66	3.66	3.59	4	3.89	3.6	3.27

Source: Grin et al. (2003: 30).

<sup>a</sup> Values in constant Euros are not provided for 1990 or earlier, since the price index series used reaches back to 1991 only.

<sup>b</sup> n.a.= not available

The RML budget line was replaced by the provisional B3-1000 line for 1999 and 2000, in order to fund ongoing projects, but even this line was finally suppressed because of the failure to install a new legal basis for RMLs actions. The total amount of resources available from the B3-1000 line over this two-year period was €2.5 million. The RML action provided co-financing up to fifty percent of eligible costs. Considering only the period from 1997 to 2000, the RML action had funded some 392 A-list projects by allocating them the entirety of the available €9,182,860; thus, the RML action has financed more RML-related projects than the other programmes. It has supported projects in various fields including education, culture and from general language promotion as well as conferences on language issues. We shall return in detail on the comparison between the RML action and the other programmes at the end of Section 4 and in Appendix 2.

The Lingua action, on the contrary, was specifically geared to the official languages of the EU; it included Irish, which was not an official language of the EU until 2007, Lëtzeburgesh, Icelandic and Norwegian. From the point in time where it became applicable, this action was open to new Member States and the pre-accession countries participating in the Socrates programme.<sup>13</sup> Under the Socrates programme – the most important EU instrument devoted to education (see below) – Lingua was a horizontal measure designed to promote language learning by European citizens, also through higher mobility for teachers and learners. According to Lingua principles, special priority had to be given to lesser used and taught EU languages.

Other programmes are directly related to languages, but not linked to any specific group of languages; therefore, both projects concerning official languages and RMLs were *a priori* eligible under these programmes. The Multilingual Information Society (MLIS) programme, concluded in 1999, was devoted to the promotion of linguistic diversity in the information society. About 4.3 per cent of the MLIS budget was devoted to A-list projects, and in absolute terms, the programme had funded four RML projects for a total amount of €647,675. Also relevant are the Language engineering (LE) programme, which was a part of the Telematics Applications Programme (TAP) programme (itself a part of the Fourth Framework Programme) and the Human Language Technologies (HTL) programme, which was the successor of LE when TAP was replaced and integrated<sup>14</sup> into the Information Society Technologies (IST) programme. IST was the largest single programme under the Fifth Framework, and its aim was to create a user-friendly information society. The HTL action, in particular, concerns the areas of interactivity between human beings and computers, multilingualism in general, and cross-lingual information management.

The main figures on the language-related programmes or action for the period 1994-2000, can be summarised as follows:

**Table 2: EU Spending on Language-related Programmes or Actions, 1994-2000 (Figures are expressed in current euros of the first year of the respective programmes)**

Languages concerned	Title	Budget line	Period	Initial Budget (€)
RMLs	Promotion and Safeguard of Regional and Minority Languages and Cultures action	B3 – 1006	1994 – 1998	18,600,000
		B3 – 1000	1999 – 2000	2,500,000
Official Languages	Lingua	B3 – 1001	1995 – 1999	See Socrates I – Tab. A2 - (no separate budget figures available)
Any Languages	Multilingual Information Society	B3 – 2004	1996 – 1999	15,000,000
	Language engineering (part of TAP)	B6 – 7111	1994 – 1998	78,000,000
	Human languages technologies (part of IST)	B6 – 6121	1998 – 2002	564,000,000

Source: adapted from Grin et al. 2003.

Except for the RML budget line, these programmes supported any languages and were not, in fact, principally devoted to RMLs. In most cases, the total amount financing RML-related projects was a very small percentage of the total (see Table A1 in the Appendix 1). This is a point to which we shall return later.

### 3.2 Programmes or Actions that are Partly Related to Languages

These programmes are presented in the second section from the bottom in Figure 1.

- European multilingual radio and television services;
- Open and Distance Learning (an action under Socrates);
- Others actions under Socrates;
- The Youth for Europe, Leonardo da Vinci, Connect, Kaleidoscope, Raphael, Ariane, INFO 2000, Media II and Philoxenia programmes.

As we can see from Figure 1, there is no partly-language-related programme specifically designed to include RMLs. This does not mean, however, that RMLs are excluded from participating in programmes targeting any language. Before turning to the latter, let us briefly consider those partly language-related programmes designed for official languages only.

The European multilingual radio and television services programme was created to support European initiatives in the domain of media with a multilingual dimension. The programme was suspended in 1998 because there was no legal basis for this budget line.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) was an action in the first phase of the Socrates programme. ODL, which was intended to promote the use of multimedia in education, turned out to be difficult to implement across the EU because of the limited spread of information and communication technologies in some countries.

Socrates has already been mentioned in relation to the Lingua action; more detail on Socrates is necessary at this point in order to clarify the links between partly-language-related programmes or actions devoted to official languages only, and those open to any languages. Socrates is the EU programme that aims to promote co-operation, equal opportunities and mobility between the Member States in the fields of education at every level. Socrates comprises several actions and gives special attention to the teaching of foreign languages, which is assumed to play an important role for mutual understanding between Member States. The first phase of Socrates, Socrates I, started in 1995 and continued until 1999. The second phase, Socrates II, was set up for the 2000–2005 period. In this subsection, we focus on Socrates I, which included the following actions: Lingua, ODL, Erasmus, Comenius, Arion and Adult Education. The first two having already been described, we now discuss the others.

Erasmus is the main EU intervention in the field of higher education. It is mainly devoted to the exchange of university students and teachers. As regards languages, universities can use their Erasmus block grant to finance language preparation courses for participating students. Minority languages are eligible when they are used by the host university. Therefore, if RMLs are used as a medium of education, Erasmus can be a useful source of support for RMLs. However, none of the A-list projects was funded through Erasmus.

Comenius is an action focusing on school education, particularly on intercultural education through transnational projects. It is aimed at all members of the education community. As to languages in general, projects limited to official languages must involve two schools from two European countries and focus on the learning of foreign languages, with a priority for less widely used and taught languages. Two A-list projects have been funded under the first phase of Comenius (1995-1999) for a total amount of €230 thousand. As to RMLs, Comenius, as well as Lingua have sponsored projects in relation mainly with educational institutions, such as schools or even universities, or with authorities responsible for education, often regional or local ones. In general, Comenius is relevant to RMLs where educational institutions teach minority languages or use them as a medium of instruction. Comenius had also funded thirteen B-list projects to improve the situation of the Roma, though in socio-economic rather than linguistic terms.

Arion is an action that supports the meeting of decision-makers and specialists in the field of education. These visits and the exchange of experience have also concerned language teaching. The relevance of Arion for RML promotion lies in the fact that the RMLs that are taught or otherwise used in the education system are eligible.

Finally, Socrates I also included the Adult Education programme, which aimed to foster the European dimension through the cultural and social education of adults. In 1997-1998, the Adult Education programme has funded two A-list projects for a total of €201,605. Adult Education was renamed Grundtvig under Socrates II. In recent years, these programmes have been merged in the large Erasmus+ Programme.

Several other programmes, even if not directly related to languages, could include a language dimension both for official languages and, though infrequently, for RMLs.

Leonardo da Vinci (now part of Erasmus+) was a programme promoting translational initiatives in vocational training in order to support Member States' policies. Improving language skills and cross-cultural understanding within the framework of education and professional training was one of the main aims of Leonardo. Between 1995 and 2000, Leonardo funded two A-list projects, where the recipient institutions were tertiary-level institutions providing vocational training. Leonardo also funded at least two B-list projects to improve the situation of the Roma.



Between 1995 and 1999, Youth for Europe (YFE III) was in its third phase. At the time of writing, YFE was an action under the broader Youth programme. Youth for Europe was a programme designed for young people aged 15 to 25 from the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA) Member States, as well as applicant states<sup>15</sup>. The aim of Youth for Europe was to encourage youth mobility, voluntary work and non-formal education in order to increase the awareness of European citizenship. Youth for Europe can be used to promote youth exchanges among RMLs communities or associations. Projects with a linguistic or intercultural dimension receive priority.

Media II (1996–2000), a new edition of Media (now part of Creative Europe), was the EU programme supporting the European audiovisual industry. Respect for linguistic and cultural diversity in European audiovisual production was one of the objectives of Media II. In this respect, “particular attention was given to the specific needs of countries with low production capacity and/or a restricted geographical and linguistic area” (Grin et al. 2003: 53).

Three EU programmes have been devoted to culture: Raphael, Kaleidoscope, and Ariane. These programmes respectively concerned cultural heritage, cultural life and, finally, books and reading. From 1996 to 1999, Kaleidoscope has funded only one A-list project – an itinerant festival in the Occitan-speaking regions – representing 0.27 per cent of the programme budget, that is, €70 thousand. By contrast, Ariane had funded 31 A-list projects between 1997 and 1999, amounting to 0.59 per cent of its budget, that is, a total of €177,647.

Connect was a link-programme connecting European programmes in different domains, such as training, education, innovation, culture, research and new technologies. In 1999, Connect funded two A-list projects, one in the domain of culture, while the second can be classified as a media project. The corresponding total expenditure was 1.7 per cent of the budget, that is, €262,380.

In concluding this paragraph dedicated to the EU programmes that are partly related to (any) language, let us also mention the existence of the INFO 2000<sup>16</sup> and Philoxenia<sup>17</sup> programmes.

The total amount of funding for partly language-related programmes or actions for the 1994–2000 period is provided in Appendix 1 (Table A2).

### 3.3 Non-language-related Programs that have Funded Language-related Actions

These programmes are presented in the third section from the bottom in Figure 1. We have to consider the programmes financed by the Structural Funds. Together with the Cohesion Fund, the Structural Funds represent the second largest European item of expenditure after agriculture. The Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund were created in order to implement the drive for economic and social cohesion. There are four Structural Funds:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)



- European Social Fund (ESF)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

During the period examined here, structural funds financed three different kinds of interventions:

1. interventions related to priority objectives<sup>18</sup>: over the 1994-1999 period, there were seven priority objectives, while from 2000 they were consolidated into just three;
2. interventions related to Community initiatives: over the 1994-1999 period, there were 13 ongoing initiatives, while after 2000 just four remained, namely, Interreg III, Leader +, Equal, and Urban II;
3. interventions related to innovative measures.

Even if such programmes do not concern languages, they can provide useful complements to support linguistic diversity. In particular, ESF financial support can be used for cultural projects – if they contribute to job creation – and therefore indirectly to languages. The projects related to priority objectives financed by ERDF, for instance, could assist in the maintenance of RMLs through the development of infrastructures for tourism, which could, in turn, slow down out-migration from RML-speaking areas.

Two programmes are worth noting within Community initiatives, namely, Interreg II and Leader II. The Interreg programme, funded by the ERDF, was adopted in 1990 and renewed and renamed Interreg II for the 1994-1999 period. The main aim of this programme was to support cross-border cooperation and stimulate interregional integration. With respect to languages, the promotion of language learning and regional cultures was taken into consideration under Interreg II. Over the 1996-1999 period, Interreg II has funded 73 A-list projects for a total amount of €1,204,092 – that is, 0.03 per cent of its budget. In 2000, it has funded one A-list project, for which cost figures are not available.

The Leader programme, funded by the EAGGF Guidance section, was launched in 1991, and renewed and renamed Leader II for the 1994-1999 period. Leader II was designed to help rural development. In 1997, Leader II has funded one A-list project, but no budget figures are available. As to B-list projects, Leader has sponsored several projects in the so-called Celtic fringe, but this could at best promote RMLs indirectly, since the RMLs projects within Interreg and Leader mainly aim at improving infrastructure and living conditions, also in RML-speaking areas.

The total amount of funding for non-language related programmes in the 1994-2000 period is provided in Appendix 1 (Table A3). The characteristics of the projects that are directly aimed at the promotion and development of RMLs from 1997 to 2000 are presented in Appendix 2.

## 4. EU Support from 2000 to 2006

Many of the programmes already presented in the preceding section were simply relabelled and renamed for the 2000-2006 period. However, crucial differences are particularly relevant to RMLs.

47

### 4.1 Programmes Directly Related to Languages

There were three such programmes:

- the Lingua action;
- the Human Language Technologies (HLT) action;
- the European Year of Languages 2001 (EYL 2001).

As shown in Figure 1, there was no longer any programme specifically related to RMLs from 2000 onwards. Following the 1998 ruling of the European Court of Justice, and after the 1999-2000 transition period, no legal basis was provided for programmes or actions specifically devoted to RMLs. However, some significant initiatives<sup>19</sup> could ultimately encourage the re-introduction of some form of direct support for RMLs. At the end of this section, we shall return in detail to the effects that the suppression of the RMLs action line has had on the distribution of funds for RML-related projects.

Let us now turn to the programmes or actions that concerned official languages only. This category included only the Lingua action, but whereas, under Socrates I, Lingua was a horizontal measure, under Socrates II, the new Lingua was an objective of Socrates II as a whole, and of the Erasmus, Comenius and Grundtvig actions in particular. In other words, Lingua completed and enriched the measures to promote language learning that were present in the other actions of the Socrates II programme. The new Lingua action was designed to encourage and support linguistic diversity throughout the EU and to help improve language teaching and learning. It also strove to promote access to lifelong language-learning opportunities appropriate to each individual's needs. Lingua could be relevant also for RMLs, considering that many of them were official languages of new Member States and of the pre-accession countries. The new *Lingua* action funded one education-related A-list project for the amount of €460 thousand.

The Human Language Technologies (HLT) action and the European Year of Languages 2001, by contrast, did not target any particular group of languages. However, they were open both to national-level official languages and to RMLs. HLT, which was a part of the Information Society Technologies programme-IST, has already been mentioned in the preceding section. In principle, therefore, IST-HLT offered possibilities for research in relation to RMLs. EYL 2001 was an action organized jointly by the European Union and the Council of Europe in 2001, with some 45 countries participating. The implementation of EYL 2001 in the EU and in the EEA was under the responsibility of the Commission.

The aims of the EYL 2001 were to celebrate European linguistic diversity, to provide information about resources for language learning and to promote the lifelong learning of languages. EYL 2001 deserves special attention because the percentage of its budget allocated to RML projects was considerably larger than in the other programmes, and in this respect it was second only to the erstwhile RML action. The languages admissible to the EYL 2001 were all the EU official and semi-official languages, as well as other languages recognised by the Member States. As to RMLs, 14.73 per cent (€758,008) of the EYL 2001 budget was devoted to A-list projects, and most of the RML projects sponsored under the EYL 2001 programme included language boards and schools, revealing a clear emphasis on core language issues.

The total amount of funding for language-related programmes in the 2000-2006 period was provided in Table 3.

**Table 3: EU Spending on Language-related Programmes or Actions, 2000-2006 (Figures are expressed in current euros of the first year of the respective programmes)**

Languages concerned	Title	Budget line	Period	Initial Budget (€)
RMLs	No one	-	-	-
Official Languages	Lingua	B3 – 1001	2000 – 2005	See <i>Socrates II</i> – Tab. A4- (no separate budget figures available)
Any Languages	Human languages technologies (part of <i>IST</i> ) – see Tab.2	B6 – 6121	1998 – 2002	564,000,000
	European Year of Languages 2001	B3 – 1003	2000 (preparatory year) and 2001	4,350,000

Source: adapted from Grin et al. 2003.

### 4.2 Programmes or Actions Partly Related to Languages

These programmes are presented in the second section from the bottom Figure 1.

- Innovative multilingual radio and television channels;
- Socrates II (except the Lingua action cf. above);
- The programmes: Youth, Leonardo da Vinci II, Minerva, eContent, Culture 2000 and Media Plus.

Both for the 1994-2000 and for the 2000-2006 periods, there was no partly-language-related programme specifically designed to include RMLs; here again, however, this does not mean that RMLs were excluded from participating in such programmes.

Let us first consider partly-language-related programmes meant for official languages only. The Innovative multilingual radio and television channels programme (2000-2001) served to relaunch objectives of the European multilingual

radio and television services programme (suspended by the Court's 1998 ruling). It offered a maximum of fifty per cent co-financing of total project costs for projects involving at least three languages. The Minerva action was in fact the earlier Open and Distance Learning (ODL) action renamed under the new phase of Socrates (Socrates II). Minerva sought to encourage European co-operation in the field of open and distance learning (ODL) and information and communication technology (ICT) in education. The fact that Minerva's objectives included the promotion of distance learning made it relevant for minority communities, in particular the more dispersed ones. As to the B-list, Minerva has mainly funded projects against intolerance and racism.

The other partly-language-related programmes listed above did not deal exclusively with official languages, and could therefore be of interest to RMLs. Within Socrates II, it is relevant to mention Comenius, Arion<sup>20</sup> and Erasmus again. Comenius funded three A-list projects for a total amount of €1,137,400 during the 2000-2005 period. Comenius funded projects mostly in the domains of culture and education, and like Minerva, it mainly funded projects against racism and intolerance. None of the A-list projects was funded through Erasmus or Arion. The former Adult education action was renewed under the name of Grundtvig. *A priori*, there was nothing to prevent adult education projects from being related to RMLs.

Media Plus was the updated and renewed version of the Media II programme, without apparent linguistic constraints, implying that Media Plus (now Creative Europe) could be of considerable potential for producers of TV programmes in RMLs.

eContent – European digital content for the global networks was the follow-up of the Multilingual Information Society (MLIS) programme and of the INFO2000 programme. eContent shared the main objectives of the preceding programmes, in particular the promotion of multilingualism and cultural diversity in global networks. In the 2001-2005 period, eContent funded one A-list project to the amount of €81 thousand, representing 0.08 per cent of the programme budget. Culture 2000 was dedicated to culture, and encompasses Raphael, Kaleidoscope and Ariane. Over the 2000-2004 period, Culture 2000 funded six cultural projects related to RMLs, mostly in publishing. These projects represent 0.15 per cent of its budget, or €255,280 in absolute terms. The RML element in the cultural programmes such as Culture 2000 (and before, Ariane, Kaleidoscope and Raphael) has been of secondary relevance in the B-list projects.

Leonardo da Vinci II was the continuation of Leonardo da Vinci I, while Youth was a broad EU programme supporting youth mobility and non-formal education. As noted before, Youth actions include the former Youth for Europe. Leonardo da Vinci II, Youth and Culture 2000 were programmes jointly linked to Socrates II in order to reinforce inter-sectorial cooperation.

The total amount of funding for partly language-related programmes in the 2000-2006 period is provided in Appendix 1 (Table A4).

### 4.3 Non-language Related Programmes that Funded Language Related Actions

There is little to add to what has been already said in subsection 3.3, beside the fact that programmes were renamed Leader + and Interreg III. Funding possibilities for RMLs under Interreg III were significant, since it was one of the largest sources of EU funding. However, “different parties who have been participating in the application procedures have commented on problems because of the decentralised structure and complicated application procedures that might discourage small organisations [...] Similar critical remarks [are] directed also at Leader +” (Grin et al. 2003: 57). Corresponding figures are provided in Appendix 1 (Table A5).

It is possible to categorize support actually given to RMLs by type of recipient institution, domains of intervention, financial amount, language(s) supported, domain of EU intervention and number of projects supported. Some of these figures have already been incorporated in the preceding overview. General patterns, however, may be summarized as follows:

- Recipient institutions: the type of institution funded under different actions varied considerably from one programme to the other and covered extremely different situations in practice. Generally, recipient institutions were often universities and schools, but they also included news articles, radio stations, or festivals.
- Domain: with the exception of the RML action, projects in the domain of culture dominate, followed by education, media and social cohesion projects respectively. As a general observation, programmes that sought to encourage language learning and to promote linguistic diversity, such as the EYL 2001, were more likely to support RML projects than others.
- Languages supported: it is impossible to reveal a clear pattern. However, several projects also included non-regional languages, and most of the Information Society Technologies (IST) programme and regional programmes (Interreg and Leader) projects included only the larger RMLs.
- Total expenditure for RMLs: the actual extent of EU financial support was quite limited. These limits are apparent first in the fact that only a small part of the various programmes and actions from which RMLs can benefit was actually spent on them. With the exception of the RML action, the EYL 2001, Connect and the Multicultural Information Society programme, the share of the respective programme budgets assigned to RML-related projects was always less than 1 per cent. As for the programmes that have, in absolute terms, funded more A-list projects in recent years, the conclusion is



that the RML action was far and away the most important support channel, followed by Comenius, Interreg, the European Year of languages 2001 and by the Multilingual Information Society programme (cf. Table A1).

**Table 4: RML Funding per Year, by Programmes and Actions (figures in euros), A-list Projects only<sup>21</sup>**

Year	RML action	%	Other programmes and actions	%
1997	3,726,858	90.8%	375,855	9.2%
1998	3,350,305	76.4%	1,094,613	24.6%
1999-2000	2,105,697 <sup>22</sup>	42.2%	2,878,401	67.8%
2001	-	0%	839,008	100%
Subtotal	9,182,860	64.8%	5,187,877	35.24%
Total	14,370,737			

Source: adapted from Grin et al. (2003: 65-66).

The pre-eminence of the RML action over other programmes and actions in funding RML-related projects emerges clearly from Table 4, which compares the relative weight of different sources of funding. As shown in Table 4, funding from the programmes other than the RML budget line increased during the last two years of its existence. Apart from the impact of the European Year of Languages, which included RMLs, this could be explained by the awareness, among organisations and authorities promoting RMLs, of the impending disappearance of the budget line. In any case, the RML action financed more A-list programmes than all others; in particular, whereas from 1997 to 2000 it funded some 392 A-list projects, all other EU programmes for which data were available funded just 152, that is, less than a third of the total (cf. Table A1).

Beside financial support, EU intervention in favour of RMLs was very important for two other reasons. First, EU support made possible the creation of common structures such as EBLUL, and network effects such as experience sharing or information exchange. In numerous cases, the EU also functioned as a catalyst for securing funds from other sources, allowing for a better implementation of the projects. In fact, in most of the programmes, at least half of the total funding was provided by non-EU sources<sup>23</sup>. Second, EU intervention had a paramount symbolic importance, since “the spectacle of EU institutions coming out in support of RMLs and offering tangible assistance provided a significant morale boost for small, marginalised language communities” (Grin et al. 2003: 31).

Policy intervention in favour of RMLs could differ in terms of how it is carried out. In particular, after the suppression of the RML action, the internal EU debate on how best to protect and promote RMLs edged towards a mainstreaming<sup>24</sup>



rather than a direct and targeted approach. The SMiLE Report warned that for a mainstreaming approach to be effective,

clear criteria and a set of fundamental principles regarding modes of support to RMLs should be included in the specific programmes /.../. These criteria and principles would have to take into consideration the particular conditions affecting the possibilities for RML-related projects to be funded (such as the complexity of the partnerships required, and the required minimum size of projects) (Grin et al. 2003: 44).

A report of the European Parliament confirms this view, arguing that “the actual rules to gain EU funding act to exclude smaller language groups, member state or otherwise” (Joan i Marí 2006: 9).

## 5. Trends after 2006

In practice, the mainstreaming approach adopted by the Commission since 2000 resulted in a substantial decrease in actual possibilities of accessing EU funding from RML communities. According to Jones,

whilst [the mainstreaming approach] does open the door on a much larger potential sources of funding, the competition for this funding is far greater and the tasks associated with submitting such an application may well be beyond the scope and reach of small language communities, especially in terms of the match funding of project work. Also, the EU now requires a guarantee against this funding in many contexts. Being able to do provide a guarantee for large sums may be very problematic in the context of endangered languages (Jones 2013: 25).

Although from 2007 to 2010 the EU had a fully-fledged Commissioner for Multilingualism who was responsible for language policy of the European Union,<sup>25</sup> and all funding programmes were made accessible for all languages, not only for official languages. RMLs was not one of the priority objectives of EU funding programmes during that period. Since 2007 new opportunities were provided for all language groups, but “it does not appear that equal access to these funds has been provided, especially for the smaller language communities” (Jones 2013: 26); officially all languages were on an equal footing legally speaking, but due to the mainstream approach the bigger languages had an advantage. It was more difficult competing for smaller languages.

To our knowledge, no official figures on the amounts spent for support to RMLs have been collected or retrieved since the SMiLE Report. Nevertheless, evidence available shows that financing has been meagre. As noted by Cullen et al. “in the major education and training programmes funded by the EU – like Socrates and Leonardo – only around 10 per cent were devoted to minority

languages” (2008a: 75), and this notwithstanding the fact that these programmes were pointed out as potential sources of support for RMLs in the Action Plan of the European Commission (2003).

Funding was also channelled via programmes such as Media and Culture, but the net contribution of these programmes to RMLs projects has been marginal. According to Cullen et al. facts show that

compared with multilingualism, minority languages [...] have consistently been ‘short changed’ with regard to concrete actions. An example to support this view is the relative lack of response at the level of the European Commission and in member states of the recommendations recently developed by the European Parliament via the ‘Ebner Report’<sup>26</sup> [...], which, inter alia, called for practical measures like a legal act to establish a multi-annual programme for linguistic diversity and the establishment of concrete financial measures to promote projects in the field (Cullen et al. 2008a: 12).

The picture has not improved since 2010. In 2010 with the disappearance of a Commissioner exclusively for multilingualism, the funding decreased. As noted in the European Parliament Resolution of 11 September 2013 on Endangered European Languages and Linguistic Diversity in the European Union, “over the last two multiannual financial framework periods (2000-2007 and 2007-2013), European funding for these languages has been cut drastically”. Minority language organisations are small, which makes it difficult to compete with majority language organisations for the same money. In previous programmes priority was given to smaller or less-widely spoken languages. Not only has this positive discrimination disappeared in the new generation of programmes, but many of the new programmes are limited to the 24 official languages. Some of the largest programmes of the EU aimed at supporting education and culture such as Erasmus+ and Creative Europe give priority to the official languages of the EU, particularly to the largest languages among those. For instance Erasmus+ gives priority to the five languages more frequently used in mobility, as the EU defines them, that is, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish), the translation and publication of fiction in the Creative Europe programme is limited to the official languages of the EU and EFTA and priority is given to the four biggest (English, French, German, and Spanish).

While funding opportunities for regional and minority languages have almost vanished, some projects contributing to RMLs – fully or partly – are still worth mentioning. A couple of research projects have been funded under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, for instance European Language Diversity for All (ELDIA), a project on the Finno-ugric minority languages coordinated by Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität in Mainz. Another is the Advancing the European Multilingual Experience (Atheme) project, coordinated by the University of Leiden, which has produced two reports on the preservation of regional languages and on their grammatical diversity. The project

Regional Languages and the Multilingual Challenge for the European Citizen, coordinated by the University of Trento is also funded under the programme. The project Mobility and Inclusion in a Multilingual Europe (MIME) explores multilingualism in the European Union and its implications in terms of inclusion and mobility. The programme on adult learning called Creactive – Create Active Aging –, which was financed under the Grundtvig line of the Lifelong Learning Programme during 2012-2014. Some of the partners of the project represented minority languages (i.e., the Aromanians from Romania and the Sardinians from Italy). Finally, let us mention the LangOER project that also received funding under the Lifelong Learning Programme 2014-2016. LangOER is a European network focused on enhancing the linguistic and cultural components of OER (open educational resources) by offering OER in less used languages (including regional and minority languages) and by enhancing sustainability through OER reuse.<sup>27</sup>

Under its predecessor, the Sixth Framework Programme, two projects including aspects relating to RMLs namely Language dynamics and management of diversity, (DYLAN), and Languages In a Network of European Excellence, (LINEE) received funding.

A project funded under Erasmus+, is GO TO the FUTURE (Gaelic Occitan TOgether For language Users Through United Roots and Experiences). The aim is to transform the way people see local languages, from a perceived handicap into an economic resource, stimulating tourism and related activities. In the programme proceeding Erasmus+, called Lifelong Learning, a project called Language and Education addressed through Research and Networking by Mercator (LEARNme) was financed. It provides policy guidelines and recommendations for policy stakeholders and practitioners in the field of language education.

By reducing financial support to RMLs, the EU gives up the only tool it has to influence the language policy of its Member States in this area. Symbolically, it also gives up its endorsement to small languages. There are several reasons for the vanishing EU support for minority languages. Members of the European Parliament are not active enough in the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament, and proposing amendments in Commission proposals does not bring too much visibility to them. Further, the previous ambition to enhance integration has been replaced by increasing demands of devolving back power to the Member States, and the European Parliament does not use all the tools at its disposal to push for financial support in favour of RMLs. The EP has on several occasions actively deleted any reference to RMLs in Commission drafts for new programme proposals. As a result, there will be less future funding for projects promoting RMLs. This is somewhat a paradox, because the Maastricht Treaty (art.192) gives the European Parliament an equivalent right to initiate legislation. The Parliament can request, by an absolute majority of its members, that the Commission “submits any appropriate proposal on matters on which

it considers that a Community act is required for the purpose of implementing this Treaty". Since the Treaty came into force only 37 legislative initiative reports have been adopted by the EP, and only one was about regional and lesser-used languages.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

The SMiLE report contains a number of results that can be useful for scholars and practitioners interested in the promotion of RMLs. Its chief goal is to offer a retrospective look through a detailed review of the lines and types of EU funding available for the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages up to and including 2001. This article starts from the point where the SMiLE report stopped. We present and revise a set of figures on the financial support provided by the EU for the protection and promotion of RMLs from 1994 to 2006 on the basis of the SMiLe Report, and we discuss some recent trends in EU support drawing from existing sources.

The paper therefore makes accessible, in a structured fashion, information which most people (scholars or citizens in general) were generally not aware of. Although lack of data often makes full-fledged cost-benefit evaluations, let alone comparisons, impossible, our findings highlight a whole range of noteworthy points. First, the unit cost of the promotion of small languages is modest. For example, the gross per-year cost per child of attending Irish-medium preschool stood, in the early 2000s, at about 400 euros; the Welsh language initiatives, called *Mentrau Iaith* which help to anchor and stimulate the use of a language at local community level, cost approximately two euros per Welsh speaker and per year. Another interesting set of findings concern transfrontier cooperation, in which the Slovenian television was involved as well.<sup>28</sup> Transfrontier cooperation can significantly enhance the cost-effectiveness of language policies by extending services (such as minority-language television programming) at a very modest marginal cost. These strategically powerful findings, at the same time, can only highlight, by contrast a sobering diagnostic: the extent of support enjoyed by RMLs in Europe in recent decades has remained, for a variety of (mostly political) reasons, rather limited.

Apart from a retrospective look, the approach developed in this paper is also an invitation to look into the future. This paper also provides tools for thinking about the protection and promotion of RMLs, and the most generally useful of those tools may well be its analytical framework itself. This framework has been applied to 17 types of actions, which can be viewed either as independent interventions and evaluated for their own sake, or analysed as policy measures reflecting a set of social and political priorities – even when they have not been adopted and implemented by state authorities. The critical conceptual connection between a proper policy plan and these specific actions rests on the possibility of interpreting the latter in terms of the main areas of intervention listed in the

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The implication is that any specific measure being contemplated, in one or another context, to protect and promote a regional or minority language, can be conceptualised, presented and defended *vis-à-vis* the outside as a coherent, properly thought-through enterprise. This contributes to the legitimization of policies in favour of RMLs in general.

Three main ideas can be singled out:

- first, the figures reported and analysed in the paper indicate that EU support to RMLs is both manageable and politically relevant;
- second, precisely because our detailed account, based on official data, of the extent of such support from 1994 to 2006 shows that the amounts concerned, even during the relatively more favourable 1990s, have remained small, they reveal that there is a considerable room for improvement. The RMLs of the EU have certainly not been cushioned or pampered;
- third, RML-specific programmes and actions (as opposed to mainstreaming support) have been much more successful at channelling resources towards RMLs. This is a particularly important finding, whether for citizens involved in the protection and promotion of RMLs or for decision-makers at the European level with responsibility for funding language policies in favour of RMLs.

Given the current evolution towards mainstreaming in the EU's approach to support for RMLs, we consider it essential for particular attention to be devoted by all stakeholders (RML users or activists, relevant language boards, scholars, as well as by the Commission itself) to ensure that the implementation of the mainstreaming strategy offers adequate safeguards for RMLs, particularly smaller ones. Let us emphasise that mainstreaming is a double-edged sword. If part of a policy approach animated by a sincere commitment to the long-term prospects of RMLs, it can herald significant advances in their situation. But mainstreaming can also hide ulterior motives, coming only just a little short of a first-class funeral for RML protection and promotion. Safeguards are therefore essential; they may include, for example, explicit and specific mentions of support to RMLs in the general objectives of relevant programmes. It is striking how often much more frequently-asked questions of gender equality *are* mentioned among overall policy goals in various substantive policies, for example in areas such as education and health; by the same token, a greater visibility of the cause of RML protection and promotion would be amply justified. Along the same lines, safeguards could also include specific targets for all relevant programmes, expressed in terms of the percentage of total programme budget that is actually spent on the protection and promotion of RMLs, or less demanding requirements in terms of non-EU matching funds secured by RML applicants.

While article 51 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union can be regarded as perhaps the biggest legal setback for regional and minority



languages, since it underlines the different competences between the Union and its Member States<sup>29</sup>, directly implying that language policy would be a competence of the Member States, its article 22 would go in the opposite direction. As noted at the outset of this paper, generally speaking, the EU professes to have a positive policy towards RMLs, as this Article states that “the Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity”, without distinguishing between the official status of languages. This would indeed call for attention to RMLs, and a Union policy that does not make undue distinction between its languages.

Summing up, this article may be useful not only as a contribution to the understanding of language policies undertaken so far, but also as a resource in the process of development of more robust and effective Community support for RMLs in the future. The very targeted angle adopted in this article, therefore, should not be seen as a restrictive one, because we believe that ploughing through these figures, despite (or perhaps because of) its admittedly limited entertainment value, is a necessary prerequisite for efficient advocacy and successful policies. Ultimately, the protection and promotion of RMLs is a political matter, and the exercise proposed in the foregoing article is intended as a modest contribution to a transparent political debate on RML protection and promotion.

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## Appendix 1

59

*Table A1: Funding for Regional and Minority Languages Projects: Overview*

Programme or action budget (€) RML share per year (%)	Year	Number of RML projects financed	Average amount spent per project (€)	Total amount spent on RML projects (€)
<b>Multilingual Information Society</b> € 15,000,000 RML share per year : 4.3 %	1998	1	139,925	139,925
	2000	3	169,250	507,750
<b>Subtotal</b>		4		<b>647,675</b>
<b>eContent</b> € 100,000,000 RML share per year: 0.08 %	2001	1	81,000	81,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		1		<b>81,000</b>
	1996	21	10,820	227,210
	1997	14	11,638	162,940
	1998	11	50,759 (1 project without budget figures)	558,351
	1999	25	10,223 (1 project without budget figures)	255,591
	2000	2	-	No budget figures available
<b>Subtotal</b>		73		<b>1,204,092</b>
<b>Leader II</b> € 1,400,000,000 RML share per year: no data available	1997	1	-	No budget figures available
<b>Subtotal</b>		1		-
<b>Connect</b> € 15,000,000 RML share per year : 1.7 %	1999	2	131,190	262,380
<b>Subtotal</b>		2		<b>262,380</b>
<b>Leonardo da Vinci I</b> € 620,000,000 RML share per year: no data available		2	-	No data available
<b>Subtotal</b>		2		-
<b>Comenius (1) (1995-1999)</b> (Action under Socrates I ; no separate budget figures available) RML share per year: no data available	1998	2	115,000	230,000

<b>Comenius (2) (2000-2005)</b> <b>(Action under Socrates II ; no</b> <b>separate budget figures available)</b> RML share per year: no data available	2000	3	379,133	1,137,400
<b>Subtotal</b>		5		<b>1,367,400</b>
<b>Lingua (2) (2000-2005)</b> <b>(Action under Socrates II ; no</b> <b>separate budget figures available)</b> RML share per year: no data available	2000	1	460,000	460,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		1		<b>460,000</b>
<b>Adult Education</b> <b>(Action under Socrates I ; no</b> <b>separate budget figures available)</b> RML share per year: no data available	1997	1	81,605	81,605
	1998	1	120,000	120,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		2		<b>201,605</b>
<b>Culture 2000</b> <b>€ 167,000,000</b> RML share per year : 0.15 %	2000	6	42,547	255,280
<b>Subtotal</b>		6		<b>255,280</b>
<b>Kaleidoscope</b> <b>€ 26,000,000</b> RML share per year : 0.27 %		1	70,000	70,000
<b>Subtotal</b>		1		<b>70,000</b>
<b>Ariane</b> <b>€ 30,000,000</b> RML share per year : 0.59 %	1997	13	10,101	131,310
	1998	18	2,574	46,337
		31		<b>177,647</b>
<b>European Year of Languages 2001</b> <b>€ 5,144,768</b> RML share per year : 14.73 %	2001	23	64,006	758,008
<b>Subtotal</b>		23		<b>758,008</b>
<b>RML action</b> <b>€ 9,182,860</b> RML share per year : 100 %	1997	152	24,519	3,726,858
	1998	171	19,592	3,350,305
	1999 - 2000	69	30,517	2,105,697
		392		<b>9,182,860</b>
<b>General total</b>		544		<b>14'667'947</b> <sup>30</sup>

Source: adapted from Grin et al. (2003: 65).

**Table A2: EU Spending on Programmes or Actions Partly Related to Languages - from 1994 to 2000 (Figures are expressed in current euros of the first year of the respective programmes)**

Languages concerned	Title	Budget line	Period	Initial Budget (€)
RML	No one	-	-	-
Official Languages	European multilingual radio and television services	B3 – 2012	1998 (end of the programme)	4,775,000
	ODL (Socrates I)			See Socrates I (no separate budget figures available)
Any Language	Socrates I: Erasmus	B3 – 1001	1995 – 1999	850,000,000 (55% of Socrates I budget)
	Comenius			(10% of Socrates I budget)
	Arion Adult Education (Lingua) – see Tab.2 (ODL)			(together: 25% of Socrates I budget)
	Leonardo da Vinci I	B3 – 1021	1995 – 1999	620,000,000
	Youth for Europe III	B3 – 1010	1995 – 1999	126,000,000
	Media II	B3 – 2010	1996 – 2000	310,000,000
	Raphael	B3 – 2000	1997 – 1999	30,000,000
	Kaleidoscope	B3 – 2001	1996 – 1999	26,000,000
	Ariane	B3 – 2002	1997 – 1999	30,000,000
	Connect	B3 – 1002	1999	15,000,000
	INFO 2000	B5 – 3300	1996 – 1999	65,000,000
	Philoxenia	Information not available	1997 – 2000	25,000,000

Source: adapted from Grin et al. (2003).

**Table A3: Non-language Related EU Programmes that have been Funding Language Related Programmes or Actions - from 1994 to 2000 (Figures are expressed in current euros of the first year of the respective programmes)**

Languages concerned	Title	Budget line	Period	Initial Budget (€)
RML	No one	-	-	-
Official Languages	No one	-	-	-
Any Languages	Objectives 1 to 7		1994-1999	Approximately 148,500,000,000
	Leader II	B2 – 146	1994 – 1999	1,400,000,000
	Interreg II	B2 – 1410	1994 – 1999	3,544,000,000
	PEACE		1995 – 1999	509,000,000

Source: adapted from Grin et al. (2003).

**Table A4: EU Spending on Programmes or Actions Partly Related to Languages - from 2000 to 2006 (Figures are expressed in current euros of the first year of the respective programmes)**

Languages concerned	Title	Budget line	Period	Initial Budget (€)
RMLs	No one	-	-	-
Official Languages	Innovative multilingual radio and television channels	Information not available	From 2000/2001	1,865,000,000
	Minerva (Socrates II)			See Socrates II (no separate budget figures available)
Any Language	Socrates II:	B3 – 1001	2000 – 2005	1,850,000,000
	Erasmus			(51% of Socrates II budget)
	Comenius			(27% of Socrates II budget)
	Arion Grundtvig (Lingua) – see Tab.3 (Minerva)			No separate figures available
	Leonardo da Vinci II	B3 – 1021	2000 – 2006	1,150,000,000
	Youth	B3 – 1010	2000 – 2006	520,000,000
	Media Plus	B3 – 2010	2001 – 2005	400,000,000
	Culture 2000	B3 – 2008	2000 – 2004	167,000,000
	eContent	Information not available	2001 - 2005	100,000,000

Source: adapted from Grin et al. (2003).

**Table A5: Non Language Related EU Programmes that have been Funding Language Related Programmes or Actions - from 2000 to 2006 (Figures are expressed in current euros of the first year of the respective programmes)**

Languages concerned	Title	Budget line	Period	Initial Budget (€)
RML	No one	-	-	-
Official Languages	No one	-	-	-
Any Languages	Objective 1, Objective 2, Objective 3		2000 – 2006	Approximately 183,300,000,000
	Leader +	B2 – 140	2000 – 2006	2,020,000,000
	Interreg III	B2 – 1410	2000 – 2006	4,875,000,000

Source: adapted from Grin et al. (2003).

## Appendix 2. The Structure of the A-list Projects

63

In this section, we focus on the characteristics of the projects that are directly aimed at the promotion and development of RMLs, and we review EU funding for RMLs on three dimensions: the importance of partners representing regional and minority languages, the type of projects, and their size. The appendix provides a variety of analytical breakdowns of the total amount of financial support spent on RMLs. Depending on the analytical angle chosen, the information available does not always enable us to assign a particular item of expenditure to a specific category. In such cases, we have decided to err on the side of caution and to keep the items concerned out of the respective summary tables. Consequently, the figure for total spending (occasionally for some subtotals) may differ between tables.

As shown in Table A6, most of the projects funded included one partner only. However, if projects funded by the RML budget line are left out, the most common kind of project included at least three partners. This reflects the fact that many EU programmes require the participation of at least three partners from three different Member States. This type of requirement complicates matters for some organisations and authorities involved in RML protection and promotion. Language barriers hinder the efficient search for partners in other countries and not all stakeholders have the resources to overcome them. Smaller RMLs cannot always compete for EU funding on an equal footing with the state languages or the bigger RMLs.

**Table A6: Funding Level by Category of Project, According to Number of Partners per Project (1997-2000) – figures in euros, A-list Projects only**

	Amount spent on projects including:			
	Only one partner	Two partners	Three partners	Four partners or more
RML action	9,182,860	-	-	-
All other programmes and actions	1,964,883	70,000	717,071	2,733,340
Subtotal	11,147,743	70,000	717,071	2,733,340
Percentage (Total: € 14,668,154 <sup>31</sup> )	76.00%	0.47%	4.89%	18.63%

Source: Grin et al. (2003: 67).

With respect to the size of the projects: the main part of the support both regarding the RML action and the other programmes or actions as a whole, was directed to comparatively big projects. More than 70 per cent of the funding under the RML action went to projects of over €30 thousand, and almost 60 per cent of the funding under other actions went to projects of over €100 thousand. The main figures are shown in the Table A7.



**Table A7: Comparison of Funding in Relation to the Size of the Project (1997-2000) – figures in euros, A-list projects only**

	Total amount spent on projects in budget range of:		
	Under € 30,000	€ 30,000 to € 100,000	Over € 100,000
RML action	2,442,282	3,031,535	3,709,043
All other programmes and actions	960,541	1,362,253	3,162,500
Subtotal	3,402,823	4,393,788	6,871,543
Percentage (Total: € 14,668,154)	23.20%	29,95%	46,5%

Source: Grin et al. (2003: 67).

However, if we consider the number of projects funded, overall some 300 projects under €30 thousand were funded, whereas less than 100 projects received EU funding between €30 thousand and €100 thousand, and only some 20 projects received more than €100 thousand. Funding under the RML action was clearly more accessible for small and mid-range sized projects than other programmes and actions.

**Table A8: Comparison of Funding in Relation to the Importance of Partners Representing Regional and Minority Languages (1997-2000) – figures in euros, A-list projects only**

	Projects with:		
	RML partners only	Majority of RML partners	Minority of RML partners
RML action	9,182,860	-	-
All other programmes and actions	2,756,304	1,647,740	1,081,250
Subtotal	11,939,164	1,647,740	1,081,250
Percentage (Total: € 14,668,154)	81.40%	11.23%	7,37%

Source: Grin et al. (2003: 68).

Finally, the great majority of A-list projects concerned RML partners only (Table A8). Nevertheless, if the RML action is excluded from the calculation, the percentage of projects with RML partners only is not particularly high. This suggests that programmes directly designed for RMLs were more likely to concern RML partners only.

It was also quite common for a project to involve a linguistic minority while the language itself was not directly promoted or did not play a central role in the project. Exceptions can be found among some of the Interreg projects, as well as most of the EYL 2001 projects included in the A-list. Other projects included a partner representing an RML, but its main goal did not need to be language protection or promotion.

Finally, it is worth noting that RML projects tended to benefit mainly from programmes with a one-off character, in the sense that they were not part of an explicit and integrated language promotion strategy. It could be important to include into the next generation programmes some criteria to cover all the issues relevant to the long-term survival of RMLs.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> In this article, no analytical difference is made between regional or minority languages (RMLs) and Lesser-used languages (LULs), and the former expression will be used throughout.
- <sup>2</sup> Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/linguistic-diversity/regional-minority-languages\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/languages/policy/linguistic-diversity/regional-minority-languages_en.htm).
- <sup>3</sup> FUEN received money under the Lifelong Learning Programme to carry out the project RML2future and the follow up project Language Diversity.
- <sup>4</sup> This article draws in particular on results presented in Chapter 2 of the SMiLE project report. A few misprints in figures quoted in the original Report have been corrected in this article.
- <sup>5</sup> Additional evidence, but limited to the 1998-2002 period, is provided in Delgado, Baltà and Staiger (2004).
- <sup>6</sup> European Journal of Language Policy. Liverpool University Press (see <http://online.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/loi/ejlp>).
- <sup>7</sup> A complete overview on the articles of the Treaties, European Parliament or Council resolutions, opinions, statements and decisions, is available in Jones (2013), Cullen et al. (2008b), Cullen et al. (2008a) and Grin et al. (2003).
- <sup>8</sup> European Parliament resolution with recommendations to the Commission on European regional and lesser-used languages – the languages of minorities in the EU – in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity (2003/2057(INI)). OJ 076 E, 25 March 2004.
- <sup>9</sup> Court of Justice ruling C-106/96 of 12<sup>th</sup> May 1998.
- <sup>10</sup> These programmes are presented in the first of the two areas or (sections) evoking semicircles.
- <sup>11</sup> Note that the B3-1006 line has decreased in real terms when the European Parliament was renewed (1989 and 1994, but not in 1984).
- <sup>12</sup> Because of a printing error, the amount of resources indicated in the SMiLE report for 1998 is €4 million instead of €3.4 million.
- <sup>13</sup> Gradually all of the central and Eastern European countries, as well as Cyprus, became involved in Socrates (and therefore in Lingua) between 1997 and 1999.
- <sup>14</sup> Jointly with the programmes Advanced Communication Technologies and Services (ACTS) and Information Technologies-Esprit (IT-Esprit).
- <sup>15</sup> A programme to foster exchanges with third countries, such as Mediterranean or Latin American countries, was also launched.
- <sup>16</sup> INFO 2000 (1996 – 1999) was a programme aimed to increase the use of multimedia products and to encourage the development of a European multimedia content industry.
- <sup>17</sup> Philoxenia (1997 – 2000) was a programme supporting European tourism, which could also encourage language learning.

- <sup>18</sup> Among others, we should mention Objective 1, which deals with helping regions whose development was lagging behind to catch up; Objective 2, which supports economic and social conversion in areas facing structural difficulties; Objective 3 which aims at modernising systems of training and promoting employment.
- <sup>19</sup> See the European Parliament Resolution on Regional and Lesser-Used Languages of 13 December 2001 (OJ C 177 E, 25 July 2002), and the already quoted European Parliament resolution with recommendations to the Commission on European regional and lesser-used languages – the languages of minorities in the EU – in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity of 4 September 2003.
- <sup>20</sup> Arion belongs to the observation and innovation programme of Socrates II, along with Eurydice, the information network on education (the Eurydice report on language learning in schools included RMLs) and NARIC (Network of Academic Recognition Centres).
- <sup>21</sup> Figures do not include an amount of €227,210 from 21 A-list projects funded in 1996 by the Interreg II programme and an amount of € 70 thousand from the Kaleidoscope programme, since the latter ran from 1996 through 1999, and the information available did not allow us to determine the amount concerning the 1997-2000 period relevant to this table (see table A1).
- <sup>22</sup> This figure differs from that given in table 2 (budget line B3-1000: €2.5 million) probably because the initial budget was not completely used.
- <sup>23</sup> This reflects the fact that, statutorily, the EU only plays a secondary role in the promotion of cultures and languages, because according to the principle of subsidiarity, Member States and local authorities retain leading competencies in these domains.
- <sup>24</sup> The mainstreaming approach can be described as the practice of incorporating a particular issue into all general programmes or policies. For example, support to a RML might be a chapter in a broader programme on the revitalisation of rural areas, together with infrastructure building or agricultural diversification programmes.
- <sup>25</sup> From 2004 to 2007, multilingualism was a responsibility of the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, and after 2010 it was re-merged into the education and culture portfolio.
- <sup>26</sup> See the aforementioned European Parliament resolution with recommendations to the Commission on European regional and lesser-used languages – the languages of minorities in the EU – in the context of enlargement and cultural diversity.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. <http://langoer.eun.org/home>.
- <sup>28</sup> The SMiLE report included two case studies of EU-funded projects involving the Slovenian language, i.e., the Slovene-German radio service (Radio Agora) and the Slovenian television cooperation.
- <sup>29</sup> “...with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity, [the Charter is applicable to] the Member States only when they are implementing Union law. They shall therefore respect the rights in accordance with their respective powers”.
- <sup>30</sup> Depending on the analytical angle chosen, the information available does not always enable us to assign a particular item of expenditure to a specific category. Consequently, the figure for total spending differs from those provided in Table 4, Table 5, Table 6 and Table 7.
- <sup>31</sup> For the same reason explained in the previous footnote, the figure for total spending differs from that provided in Table 4.